

IRTS Radio News Bulletin Sunday 3rd April 2022

South Eastern Amateur Radio Group EI2WRC

Final reminder! Tickets for the IRTS Gala Dinner on Saturday, the 9th of April at the Woodford Dolmen Hotel must be pre-booked from John EI7IG before 6 p.m. tomorrow, Monday the 4th of April. Tickets cost 35 Euro. People who turn up on the night without a dinner ticket will not be allowed access to the dinner. The SEARG radio rally will take place on Sunday the 10th of April, starting at 10:30 a.m. sharp and closing at 2:00 p.m. There will be no admittance to the rally to the public until 10:30 a.m. The rally promises to be a great day with Ireland's main radio dealers and equipment suppliers in attendance. There will also be many individual traders in attendance so come early to grab a bargain! Entry to the rally will be 5 Euro.

The Irish Radio Transmitters Society 2022 Annual General Meeting will take place at 11:00 p.m. on Sunday, the 10th of April 2022 in the Morrison Suite at the Woodford Dolmen Hotel. Entry to the AGM will only be permitted to fully paid-up IRTS members and in line with previous practice membership will be checked prior to entry. EI2WRC are looking forward to welcoming everyone to Carlow over the weekend for the event. For more information about the event please see www.irtsagm2022cw.blogspot.com

For anyone that wishes to find out more about the South Eastern Amateur Radio Group and their activities you can drop them an email to southeasternarg@gmail.com or please feel free to go along to any of their meetings. You can check their website www.searg.ie and you can also join them on Facebook and follow them on Twitter.

DXCC Programme Activity

The DXCC programme is an ARRL award programme to provide recognition for amateur radio stations that have worked and confirmed at least 100 different DXCC entities. Joe Ryan, EI7GY, reports that there has been plenty of activity by EI stations participating in this award programme in recent months: this is graphically illustrated by the number of changes during March to the DXCC standings of EI call signs highlighted at www.irts.ie/dxcc. There are now 107 EI call signs in the published list of DXCC credits awarded by ARRL, an increase of 10 over the past year.

Homebrew SDR Transceiver

Last Thursday, Markus Grosser, home call-sign DL8GM, gave a presentation to the Cyprus Amateur Radio Society titled "The C25 SDR Project: Homebrewing a Modern Transceiver". The detailed presentation was live streamed from the 5B4ES shack and can now be viewed as a recording on the YouTube channel of CARS. The C25 radio kit can be bought either as a tested set of boards, or part built, although the supplier is already warning about difficulties sourcing many of the most basic components. Due to supply chain disruptions semiconductors and even basic passive components are hard to come by lately. Even if one is not interested in the purchase or assembly of this HF transceiver, the video is recommended viewing, it gives an excellent introduction into the workings of modern SDR equipment.

UKEICC 80m Contest

The next UKEICC 80m contest for the 2021-22 series will take place on 6th of April, starting at 20:00 zulu. The one hour contest will again host two bonus stations, G5GEI will be operated by David, G3PLE, and EI5G will be operated by Declan, EI9FVB. Details about entering and how to submit the log for this increasingly popular contest can be viewed at www.ukaicc.com.

SWL News

Many SWLs consider broadcast stations on long-wave to be the work-horses of broadcasting. Due to the power supply requirements of the high-power transmitters employed at these installations the electricity bill makes for a substantial portion of the operating costs. Following the surge in energy prices RTL/M6 has opted to curtail their night broadcasting, when there are fewer listeners. Broadcasting Center Europe (BCE), the operator of the 1500 kiloWatt Beidweiler transmitter on 234 kHz with its three 290m tall towers increased the rental price of transmitters. RTL/M6 did not want to pay more, so the only option was to decrease airtime.

Meanwhile, ShortWave.de has now increased the length of their transmissions on the 49 meter band, taking advantage of improved propagation conditions. They broadcast a mixed programme which includes regular amateur radio newscasts. During the summer of 2022 they are now transmitting daily on 6160 kHz from 07:00 until 22:00 UTC, and also on 3975 kHz from 16:00 until 22:00 UTC.

The GB2RS News Team reports a scheduled annual maintenance shutdown of the MSF 60kHz Radio Time Signal service, allowing for safe working on the masts and

antennas. The service will be off-air from 0700 to 1700 UTC each day from the 4th to the 21st of April. The transmission will be restored overnight whenever possible. A radio-controlled clock using the 60kHz signal will not be able to pick up the MSF signal during these periods, so may drift off from the correct time.

WSPR Beacon in Antarctica

The following news item is a translation from an AMSAT report: AMSAT Argentina has prepared and donated to Cocoantar (Antarctic Joint Command), a beacon in WSPR mode on the 22nd of March, when the winter southern hemisphere solstice occurred. This beacon was installed and began its operation on 40, 20, 15 and 10m from the Esperanza Antarctic base, emitting the call-sign LU1ZV. In just one day, this permanent beacon has already been received and confirmed by multiple stations, allowing real-time viewing of propagation and range conditions in the bands that are broadcasted. This reaffirms and makes known to the world the will and commitment of Argentina of its permanent presence in on the white continent of Antarctica, together with the Argentine Amateur Radio, helped by AMSAT-LU.

New Operating Modes

In view of the steady increase of FT8 and other computer based traffic on the HF bands, a new type of license has been proposed to cater for the increased burden on the already overworked testers, especially digital mode operators. Given that most shacks can no longer function without a computer it is only logical that unattended operations require special provisions regards licensing. Self-aware logging programs and automated computer based QSL services have been successfully integrated, similar to the WSPR system, now forming the newly created 'First Automated Protocol - Radio Interface Listener' (1.AP-RIL), using Artificial Intelligence (A.I) to make and to log contacts. This has already caused a stir in some radio forums, as this will require a rethink regards a new type of syllabus for the HAREC examinations, e.g. provisions will have to be made to create a new exam format for A.I. It is unclear how the morse exam will be impacted, as there are no speed limits when it comes to A.I. based CW QSO between computer driven radios. Also, some Hams are not happy about the prospect of A.I. completing the DXCC in just one afternoon, even during radio blackouts.

The Propagation Horoscope

We currently enjoy propagation conditions not seen since the last solar cycle. On

Wednesday and Thursday fast traveling earth-facing CMEs from two very active sunspot regions on the sun's northern hemisphere combined to form a shock-wave starting to affect us since late on Friday. Combined with a separate X-ray flare from a large sunspot region on the southern hemisphere this results in a solar flux peaking at over 150. The geomagnetic field is moderately upset, giving us a mixed bag of radio blackouts, preceded and followed by surprise openings on the higher HF bands into all parts of the world. VK/ZL, African and Asian stations can be heard at the same time on 30 to 15 meters, on 10 and 12 meters fast operation is required to account for deep QSB and rapid changes. The lower bands will predictably be subject to a high D-Layer absorption. Northern circuit paths are affected by aurora, one can frequently hear humm and flutter modulating 80m signals. Expect the solar wind to remain close to 500km/s, the kP index will not drop below 3, peaking 4 to 5 during and after this weekend. Predictions will become increasingly erratic, so the best advice is to switch on the radio and expect to work exotic DX even with moderate antennas. Make sure you keep an eye on 12 and 10 meters and above and have a prefix list at hand.

That is the news for this week. Items for inclusion in next week's radio news can be submitted by email to newsteam@irts.ie for automatic forwarding to both the radio and printed news services. Please submit news items as early as possible, allowing for travel and preparations for the AGM in Carlow.

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